

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
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First Regular Session)

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SENATE
S. No. 1583

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 14, Section 1 provides that:

SEC. 1. The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

Literacy is one of the foremost concerns in our country. As our population grows and our poverty increases, there is greater and greater challenge to reach out to our countrymen and provide their children with the gift of literacy.

In order for our literacy program to be more cost and time efficient, we should integrate it with our early health programs spanning from pre-natal care to pre-school age services. This way we will be able help parents and children together as this is the time when they spend most of their time together. Before school age, it is the parents who are primarily responsible for the education of the children. By establishing the program early on, we will be able to better prepare our children for school. That way, the children can have an easier time getting started in school.

This bill seeks to encourage the private sector to develop programs which would help parents and children to read and take up the habit of reading.¹


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

¹ This bill was originally filed in the Fourteenth Congress, Second Regular Session

- 1 a. healthcare providers, doctors, and nurses, trained in research-based
2 methods of early language and literacy promotion, encourage
3 parents to read aloud to their young children, and offer
4 developmentally appropriate recommendations and strategies to
5 parents for the purpose of reading aloud to their children;
- 6 b. healthcare providers, at health supervision visits, provide each
7 child between the ages of 6 months and 5 years a new,
8 developmentally appropriate children's book to take home and
9 keep; and
- 10 c. volunteers in waiting areas of healthcare facilities read aloud to
11 children, modeling for parents the techniques and pleasures of
12 sharing books together;
- 13 2. demonstrates, through research published in peer-reviewed journals,
14 effectiveness in positively altering parent behavior regarding reading
15 aloud to children, and improving expressive and receptive language in
16 young children; and
- 17 3. receives the endorsement of nationally-recognized medical associations
18 and academies.

19 C. SECRETARY - means the Secretary of Education, unless otherwise indicated.

20 SECTION 3. *Program Authorized.* – The Secretary is authorized to award grants to
21 eligible entities under this subpart to enable the eligible entities to implement Pediatric Early
22 Literacy Programs.

23 SECTION 4. *Applications.* – An eligible entity that desires to receive a grant under this
24 subpart shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and including
25 such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

26 SECTION 5. *Matching Requirement.* – An eligible entity receiving a grant under this
27 subpart shall provide either directly or through private contributions, in cash or in-kind, non-

1 Federal matching funds equal to not less than 50 percent of the grant received by the eligible
2 entity under this subpart.

3 SECTION 6. *Use of Funds.* - An eligible entity receiving a grant under this subpart shall -

4 A. enter into contracts with private nonprofit organizations, or with public agencies,
5 selected based on the criteria described in Section 7, under which each contractor will
6 agree to establish and operate a Pediatric Early Literacy Program;

7 B. provide such training and technical assistance to each contractor of the eligible entity
8 as may be necessary to carry out this subpart; and

9 C. include such other terms and conditions in an agreement with a contractor as the
10 Secretary determines to be appropriate to ensure the effectiveness of such programs.

11 SECTION 7. *Contractor Criteria.* - Contractors shall be selected under Section 6 on the
12 basis of the extent to which the contractors give priority to serving a substantial number or
13 percentage of at-risk children, including-

14 A. low-income children (defined in this section as children from families with incomes
15 below 200 percent of the poverty line), particularly low-income children in high-
16 poverty areas;

17 B. children without adequate medical insurance;

18 C. children living in rural areas;

19 D. children with limited access to libraries.

20 SECTION 8. *Restriction on Payments.* - The Secretary shall make no payment to eligible
21 entities under this Act unless the Secretary determines that the eligible entity or a contractor of
22 the eligible entity, as the case may be, has made arrangements with book publishers or
23 distributors to obtain books at discounts that are at least as favorable as discounts that are
24 customarily given by such publisher or distributor for book purchases made under similar
25 circumstances in the absence of government assistance.

26 SECTION 9. *Reporting Requirement.* - An eligible entity receiving a grant under this
27 subpart shall report annually to the Secretary on the effectiveness of the program implemented

1 by the eligible entity and the programs instituted by each contractor of the eligible entity, and
2 shall include in the report a description of each program.

3 SECTION 10. *Appropriations.* –The amount necessary for the initial implementation of
4 this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the Department of Education under the
5 current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for its full
6 implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act as a distinct and
7 separate item.

8 SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or
9 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
10 valid and subsisting.

11 SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
12 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or is inconsistent
13 with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

14 SECTION 13. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
15 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

16 Approved,

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